

VZCZCXRO0776

OO RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDA RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHLN
RUEHLZ RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHSI #0658 1081414
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 171414Z APR 08
FM AMEMBASSY TBILISI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9290
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS TBILISI 000658

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR DAS BRYZA & EUR/CARC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KIRF](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: GEORGIANS EXPRESS CONCERN OVER EXPULSION OF PRIEST
FROM ABKHAZIA

1. (SBU) The Ambassador received the following letter, dated April 11, from Deputy Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze, drawing attention to the apprehension of an ethnic Georgian priest by "Abkhazian military intelligence" and his expulsion from Abkhazia. Vashadze describes this case as a violation of several specific provisions of international human rights instruments, and as one in a series of continuing human rights violations committed by the Abkhaz de facto authorities against ethnic Georgian residents of the Gali district. Post will continue to monitor this case.

2. (SBU) Begin text of letter:

Excellency,

I am writing to you to express my deep concern over the latest developments in Abkhazia, Georgia, where, despite the permanent presence of the CIS peacekeepers and the international team of UN observers, violations of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms by the separatist regime occur on an everyday basis.

In this context, I would like to draw your attention to the recent case that happened on 10 April 2008, in the Gali district of Abkhazia, Georgia: a rapid reaction group of so-called "Abkhazian military intelligence" apprehended at his private house priest of the Saint Trinity Cathedral Pimeni (Roman Kardava). Later he was expelled and moved by force over the Samegrelo-Abkhazia administrative border.

The main reason of this arrest and then expulsion is the fact that Father Pimeni was practicing and teaching Christian religion in Georgian language and was trying to renovate previously damaged Georgian churches in the Gali district. It is noteworthy that Father Pimeni is an ethnic Georgian, and he and his family reside permanently in Gali.

It should be stressed that this illegal action undertaken by the representatives of the separatist regime constitutes a violation of a series of widely recognized human rights and freedoms.

In particular, provisions of the following international and regional human rights instruments have been violated: Article 9 (the right to liberty and security of person, prohibiting arbitrary arrest or detention); Article 18 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion that, inter alia, includes the freedom to maintain one's religion or belief in worship, observance and practice); Article 26 (prohibition of discrimination, inter alia, based on language and religion) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as Article 9 (freedom of religion); Article 5 (right to liberty and security prohibiting arbitrary arrest or detention); Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination, inter

alia, based on language and religion) of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Taking into consideration all the aforementioned and previous cases of gross and mass human rights violations of the ethnic Georgians in Abkhazia, Georgia, it is more than obvious now that repeated demands of the Georgian side to establish an independent and effective UN/OSCE Human Rights Office in the Gali district, in conformity with a number of the UN Security Council resolutions on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, are completely justified and there is a strong need to translate these provisions into practice.

We call upon you to give due consideration and assessment to the fact under review and to make use of all leverages available to address this problem and prevent such violations from happening in the future.

Respectfully yours,
Grigol Vashadze
Deputy Minister

TEFFT